

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03

INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03

SS-15 USIA-15 ACDA-19 IO-13 TRSE-00 MBFR-04 SAJ-01

DRC-01 /145 W

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R 181703Z SEP 73

FM AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8695

INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA

AMEMBASSY ATHENS

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG

AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS

USMISSION EC BRUSSELS UNN

C O N F I D E N T I A L BRUSSELS 5317

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, NATO XT, BE

SUBJ: DISQUIETING TRENDS ON INTERNATIONAL POLICIES IN CVP

REF: BRUSSELS 5172 AND 5214

1. SUMMARY: IN FOLLOW-UP DISCUSSIONS WITH CVP ELDER
STATESMEN REPOSSIBLE REORIENTATION OF THEIR PARTY ON
INTERNATINAL POLICIES, I HAVE RECEIVED ASSURANCES THAT
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FORTHCOMING CVP CONGRESS IS VERY UNLIKELY TO MAKE ANY

FUNDAMENTAL CHANGES BUT FOUND DEEP CONCERN ABOUT LONGER-TERM TRENDS IN PARTY, BELGIUM AND EUROPE AS A WHOLE. END SUMMARY.

2. ASSURANCES OF FOREIGN MINISTER VAN ELSANDE HIMSELF A CVP MEMBER, AND THE FLEMISH SOCIAL CHRISTIAN PARTY (CVP) PRESIDENT MARTENS (SEE REFTELS) HAVING NOT ALLAYED MY CONCERNS ABOUT POSSIBLE DELETERIOUS TRENDS ON INTERNATIONAL POLITICS WITHIN THE CVP, AND URGED BY FORMER FOREIGN MINISTER HARMEL WHO EXPRESSED TO ME HIS UNEASINESS ABOUT SHIFTING ATTITUDES AMONG SOCIAL CHRISTIANS, I MET SEPARATELY WITH EX-DEFENSE MINISTER AND CVP FOUNDER SEGERS AND WITH LONG-TIME MINISTER AND CVP SPOKESMAN ON INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS MINISTER OF STATE DE SCHRIJVER TO OBTAIN THEIR VIEWS.

3. BOTH SEGERS AND DE SCHRIJVER SAID VAN ELSANDE AND HIS CVP COLLEAGUES IN THE CABINET WERE UNDER HEAVY PRESSURE FROM A GROWING FACTION IN CVP COMPRISED OF YOUNGER PARTY WORKERS, INTELLECTUALS AND CATHOLIC TRADE UNION FUNCTIONARIES WHOSE INTEREST IN RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCE HAS BEEN DEFLECTED BY SECULARIZATION TO POLITICAL CAUSES. DRAFT PAPERS CIRCULATED IN CVP PRIOR TO ITS OCTOBER 27-28 CONGRESS WHICH PREPOSE DEMILITARIZATION OF BELGIUM, NEUTRALISM. AND THUS, EFFECTIVE WITHDRAWAL OF BELGIUM FROM NATO WERE SUBMITTED BY THEM. NEITHER SEGERS NOR DE SCHRIJVER BELIEVED, HOWEVER, THAT THE PACIFIST, NEUTRALIST FACTION WOULD PREVAIL; RATHER, THE CONGRESS WOULD REAFFIRM ESTABLISHED FOREIGN POLICIES AND REJECT ANY RESOLUTION ENVISAGING SEVERANCE OF TIES WITH THE U.S. AND NATO.

4. NEVERTHELESS, BOTH MEN WERE WORRIED ABOUT POPULAR TRENDS SURFACING IN PROGRAMATIC STATEMENTS OF CVP LEFT AND OF THE INFLUENCE THE LEFT IS ASSURED IN PARTY COUNCILS BY THE REQUIREMENT THAT ONE-THIRD OF THE MEMBERS OF ALL PARTY BODIES BE UNDER 35 YEARS OLD. THIS PROVISION WAS INTENDED TO REJUVENATE PARTY BY INFUSING SOME YOUTHFUL IDEALISM; HOWEVER, LACK OF REALISM DISPLAYED

BY NEWCOMERS, WHO LACK EXPERIENCE IN PRACTICAL POLITICS OR GOVERNMENT, BODES ILL FOR POLITICAL STABILITY.

5. SEGERS AND DE SCHRIJVER DEEMED THE SITUATION IN BELGIUM
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SYMPTOMATIC NOT ONLY OF PROFOUND CHANGES IN BELGIUM BUT IN EUROPEAN SOCIETY AS A WHOLE. YOUTH ARE ALIENATED FROM TRADITIONAL VALUES AND ALL INSTITUTIONAL AUTHORITY HAS SLACKENED. SEGERS VIEWED RECENTLY ANNOUNCED DEFENSE REFORMS (BRUSSELS 5168) AS A SURRENDER TO YOUNG PEOPLE'S REJECTION OF, AND CONTEMPT FOR, DISCIPLINE. BELGIAN SOCIETY, TOO, THESE GENTLEMEN FELT, IS YIELDING TO THE APPEALS OF HEDONISM, WITH THE PACIFIST FACTION IN THE CVP SIMPLY ARTICULATING THE

ASPIRATIONS OF A NEW GENERATION THAT HAS FORGOTTEN THE LESSONS
OF HISTORY AND ACCLAIMS DETENTE AS THE COMFORTABLE ALTERNATIVE
TO FULFILLMENT OF CIVIC DUTY.

6. COMMENT: THESE TALKS AS WELL AS EVENTS WHICH LEAD TO
THEM, TEND TO CONFIRM THE FEARS EXPRESSED IN EMBASSY A-102
OF APRIL 25 (NOTAL) THAT TRENDS AMONG CHRISTIAN YOUTH AND WORKERS
MAY BE EVEN MORE DISQUIETING THAN THOSE PERCEIVED ON
SOCIALIST LEFT. AT BEST, THEY INDICATE PROBLEMS WE AND OUR
BELGIAN FRIENDS FACE IN MAINTAINING DESIRED ORIENTATION IN
BELGIUM'S EXTERNAL POLICIES AND ITS DEFENSE POSTURE. STRAUZ-HUPE

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